

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

At the very least, Sinclair should be aiming at some sort of objectivity. Last night I saw "Choice 2004" on PBS. To me it was an example of fair and balanced reporting by reporting on both their strengths and weaknesses. This is what good news reporting should be about in a democracy.

On the other hand, from what I have read about "Stolen Honor", it sounds like an extended attack ad on one candidate. If they show it under the pretext that this type of reporting is news, it damages the credibility of the media and it damages our democracy.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.